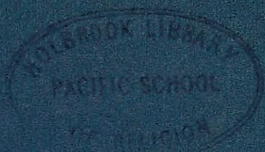
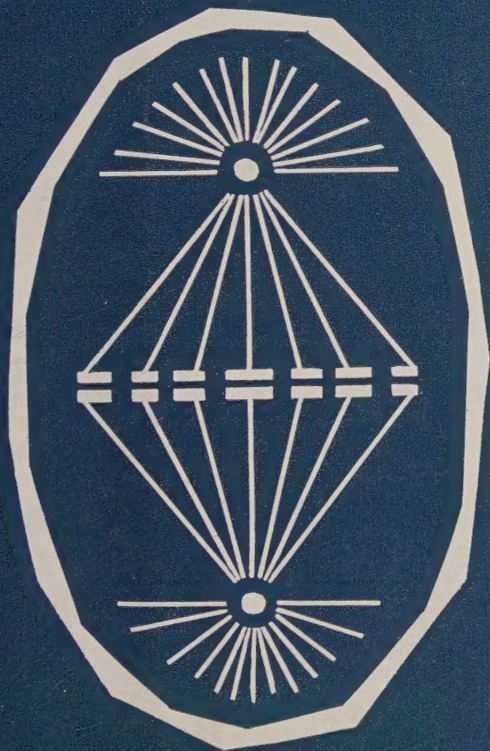


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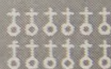
THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

RICHARD M. FAGLEY
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social action

December, 1958

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The population problem and family planning

The most neglected major international issue is the population explosion taking place in the economically less developed world. It may be that the most neglected moral issue, among the churches of the ecumenical movement, is the related question of voluntary family planning. Neither condition is likely to last much longer. The population problem is pressing its claims with an insistence too urgent to be ignored either by the cautious politician or the hesitant churchman. With the unprecedented increases in population, the more fundamental question of the Christian doctrine of the family requires serious consideration.

By Richard M. Fagley, Executive Secretary of the Commission of the Churches on International Affairs of the World Council of Churches and International Missionary Council. This article is a somewhat shorter version of one appearing in the October, 1958, issue (Vol. XI, Nr. 1) of the Ecumenical Review.

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION

For many years students of demography (statistical study of populations) have been warning that the rapid rise in the world's population threatens the means of subsistence. Laymen, however, have tended to regard the danger as remote and to assume that it would be offset by technological advances in the production of food. Also, the public has been lulled by the fact that politicians have feared to discuss a matter linked with the controversial question of "birth control." Even administrators of developmental assistance, who are privately deeply concerned about the population explosion, have hesitated to sound the tocsin, lest support for the aid programs be jeopardized.

No intergovernmental help for family planning

The result is that practically nothing is being done at the intergovernmental level to help the less developed countries cope with their mushrooming population problems. In the past eight years United Nations agencies have undertaken only two modest little projects related to family planning, and both are now terminated. The larger U.S. program has avoided the subject completely. The World Health Organization quickly abandoned, under the pressure of certain governments, the idea of aid in family planning. It was not until 1957 that the United Nations General Assembly even agreed to discuss the relationship of the demographic and development problems. While the Food and Agriculture Organization of the U.N. and other agencies are assisting less developed countries to expand their food resources, population pressures are accelerated by public health programs which are dramatically cutting death rates.

Rapid reduction in death rates

The application of modern medical knowledge in Asia, Africa, and Latin America, in which missionary doctors have played a pioneer role, is upsetting the ancient and tragic population balance of high birth rates offset by high death rates. It is the control of epidemics and the reduction of infant mortality unmatched by any comparable efforts to reduce rates of fertility, which produces the peril and potential curse. The employment of relatively inexpensive public health measures cut the death rate in Ceylon nearly in half, in eight years.

As Kingsley Davis of the University of California, and U.S. representative on the U.N. Population Commission, has stated:

The amazingly accelerated reduction of mortality in underdeveloped areas in recent years has . . . been accomplished by international disease control, not by economic development in these areas themselves. It required no essential change in the customs and institutions of the people, no advance in general education, no growth in per capita income.

This is a pivotal point. Reducing mortality in the less developed regions, with modern aids, has proved to be a relatively easy, inexpensive, and quickly productive aspect of international development efforts. Consequently, it has moved ahead rapidly. In the long run it means more hands, and even now stronger hands, to help. But its main initial effect is rapid growth in the number of mouths to feed.

The cumulative evidence of a rapidly spiralling population is too convincing to permit further evasion. As inadequate data improve in accuracy, both estimates of current populations and forecasts of future growth are forced upwards. The biggest new factor was the Chinese census of 1953. The first modern census in that land showed not only that previous guesses had underestimated the Chinese population by 100 million or more, but that the age composition, with 45 per cent 18 years or younger, foretold dynamic future growth. The projected world total for 1980 has risen in successive U.N. surveys:

World total, 1980

1951 estimates	2,976 to 3,636 millions
1954 estimates	3,295 to 3,990 millions
1958 estimates	3,850 to 4,280 millions

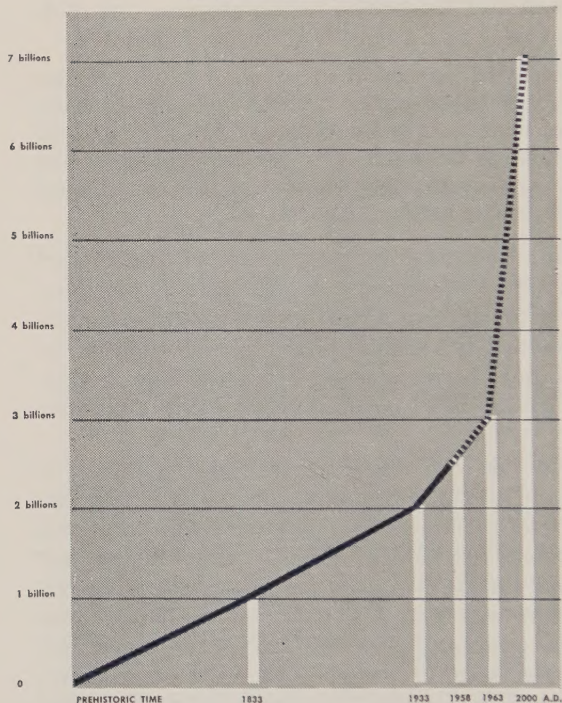
Thus, in addition to actual acceleration in population growth, there is the added fact that improved information and more careful analysis indicate that most previous estimates of this growth were too low.

World population of more than six billion by A.D. 2000

The new United Nations forecast¹ indicates that a projection of available data into the future means that mankind, having

¹ *The Future Growth of World Population*, United Nations, New York, 1958, 80c,

THE WORLD'S POPULATION IN BILLIONS



reached the billion mark about 1830 and the two billion mark about 1930, will pass the three billion mark about 1963, and zoom to close to seven billion by 2000 if birth rates do not fall. Of course, the actual totals may be curbed by famine, disease, or war—which is what Mr. Malthus was talking about. Assuming peace and rapid economic development, however, but without a comparable de-

velopment of voluntary family planning, this is the prospect.

Birth rates higher in underdeveloped countries

If one looks at the regional totals and sub-totals of the U.N. forecast it becomes clear that the center of the population explosion is in the underdeveloped world. The economically more developed countries of North America, Europe, U.S.S.R., Japan, and Australasia anticipate an increase of 64 per cent in the period 1955-2000. But the other two-thirds of the human race in Africa, Asia, and Latin America confront a prospective increase of 168 per cent in the brief span of 45 years. And this estimate assumes a reduction of birth rates after 1975. This is an increase of more than 2 per cent per year for the whole underdeveloped world. In many countries, the rate is higher, the excess of births over deaths approaching or even exceeding 30 per thousand. Latin America has the most rapid rate, Asia less but

rising, and Africa still lower, but likely to rise fairly rapidly as modern medicine reduces the rate of mortality.

When such explosive increases are superimposed on countries already densely populated, the urgent character of the population problem is seen. A Western agricultural country, Denmark, has 370 persons per square mile of agricultural area. Mainland China has 550, India 635, Indonesia 1,230, and Egypt 2,300. When governments confront such merciless and mounting pressures of population, how long will they resist temptations to follow desperate courses in external policy?

Population increase threatens the standard of living

The implications for internal policy are equally if not more ominous. In view of the "revolution of rising expectations," governments in the underdeveloped world must attempt to raise the standard of living through economic and social development. Without much capital except manpower, the less developed countries not only see the gap between themselves and the industrialized societies widening, but also find that their gains are offset by population increases. The Indian Five Year Plan, confronted by an annual increase of five million persons, has been in grave jeopardy—a fact of world-wide portent. Other development plans are meeting similar obstacles.

A look at the estimates for the present decade justifies the term "explosion" to describe the demographic situation. The U.N. forecast estimates world population will increase by more than 400 million persons between 1950 and 1960; and about three-fourths of the increase will be in the less developed areas of the world. The annual increase is now 44 or 45 million, or 120,000 persons a day. This is the population explosion.

INCREASING FOOD SUPPLIES

Whatever else is required, energetic measures are needed to increase the world's food supplies, if we are to keep pace with the growth of population, not to mention lifting nutrition to a more adequate level.

The world can produce far more food

There are many possibilities for enlarging the world's larder. A U.N. report in 1951 expressed the judgment of a group of ex-

perts that the production of many crops could be doubled in two decades or less by the wider use of fertilizers, insecticides, improved seeds, and better crop rotation. Part of the 6 billion acres of pasture land, and of the 1½ billion acres of marginal land, can be added to the 2 to 3 billion acres of cultivated land, for the production of more efficient crops. Diets with reduced animal protein can be supplemented by synthetic amino acids. Fisheries now largely concentrated in the Northern Hemisphere can be extended to the Southern.

Longer range possibilities include the development of the vast potential of tropical agriculture, particularly in the Amazon basin and Central Africa. Deserts may be made to bloom through irrigation powered by atomic pumping stations. Algae may be converted to human food. Yeasts may make carbohydrate wastes fit for human consumption. It seems clear that with sufficient effort and capital a far larger world population can be fed.

More food will not solve the population problem

If the present population explosion is to be absorbed, however, there is an additional condition, too often ignored by those who run away from demography. That is the need for adequate distribution, if a good part of mankind is not to starve. The less developed economies, which must bear the brunt of the population growth, are those least able to avail themselves of the enlarged potential in food production. They lack the capital for exploiting some of the processes. In Asia, at least, soil erosion is probably taking place at a more rapid rate than soil improvement. The main increases in food production are taking place in developed areas such as North America and Australia. In view of the present level of developmental assistance, there is not much ground for hope that the peoples of the more developed lands will make the sacrifices required to feed an ever growing population in Asia.

A vast increase in food supplies can soften the consequences of the population explosion, but cannot solve them. Man does not live by bread alone, even at the physical level. And other factors of living space come into play as the population mounts. As the U.N. report implied, the population problem cannot be solved solely by development:

THE POPULATION EXPLOSION IN UNDERDEVELOPED AREAS



Anticipated population increase 1955 - 2000

64% IN THE DEVELOPED
ONE-THIRD OF THE WORLD.

168% IN THE UNDERDEVELOPED
TWO-THIRDS OF THE WORLD.

With the present rate of increase, it can be calculated that in 600 years the number of human beings on earth will be such that there will be only one square metre for each to live on. It goes without saying that this can never take place; something will happen to prevent it.

VOLUNTARY FAMILY PLANNING

Consequently, those who take the population problem seriously regard effective family planning as indispensable in an adequate approach to the population explosion. Some evade the issue by hoping that higher standards of living will somehow reduce fertility rates, as has been the case in the West. This hope is basically irrelevant, since efforts to raise standards of living in the underdeveloped world tend to be swallowed up by population growth. Moreover, there is no automatic connection between a higher standard of living and lower fertility: the main connecting link is some form of voluntary family limitation—later marriages, periodic continence, or contraception. To talk about a reduction of fertility through greater material abundance is a euphemism for birth control.

Non-Christian religions do not forbid birth control

Perhaps 85 per cent of the people of the underdeveloped world live in areas of predominantly non-Christian cultures. Consequently the attitude of the non-Christian religions to family limitation is of importance. While more research is needed, the answer appears to be that none of the major non-Christian religions interposes basic doctrinal objections to efforts to space and limit the procreation of children. There are religious factors making for large families, as the Hindu emphasis on the importance of sons in relation to religious duty. But none evidently interposes a doctrinal *obstat* to contraception.

Non-theological barriers to family planning

It is quite another thing when one looks at the mores and social patterns of these societies. In many situations there is a tradition favoring large families, perhaps reflecting the times when a large family provided assurance that some progeny would survive. Also, in certain areas large families provide a kind of old-age insurance for the parents. In some places, a large number of children are needed to help till the land. When such obstacles are added to the fact that family planning is a highly personal matter, the barriers to birth control appear formidable. But the barriers are non-theological.

It should be added, however, that there is a growing basis for family limitation in many of the less developed countries. As the status of women improves, the demand for means to limit conception is voiced more strongly. A barometer of sentiment is the increasing resort to abortion and sterilization, in the absence of cheap and effective contraception. In Japan, the birth rate has been cut in half in a decade, mainly by the tragic means of abortion. If oral contraception proves effective and cheap, without injurious side effects, it may be that the demographic situation in Asia will change radically within two or three decades. The experience in Japan shows that a rapid reduction in the birth rate is possible. If the problem in countries less developed than Japan is more difficult, at least it can be said that in general the peoples of the underdeveloped world are more eager to be helped in this matter than the West has been prepared to give assistance.

Position of Communists

A special word should be added in regard to Communism. At the World Population Conference of 1954, the main criticism of "Malthusianism" came on the one side from Communist delegates and on the other from some who were Roman Catholic. The Communist thesis was that social ownership of the means of production overcomes the obstacles to feeding the natural increase in population. Two years after the China census of 1953, the leaders of the Chinese Communist regime adopted a population policy radically different from this thesis, and have been attempting to produce and promote the use of contraceptives. If recent reports of a further reversal of policy should prove true, the implications for East Asia and world peace may be grim.

The chief opposition to contraception at the intergovernmental level and in areas of Catholic predominance comes from the position of the Roman Church. The effectiveness of this position depends in part on the fact that the churches of the ecumenical movement have not as yet made clear a common position.

THE ROMAN CATHOLIC POSITION

The fundamental Biblical tenet relating to the family, in the tradition of the Western Church, is the injunction in Genesis 1:28 to "be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it." Despite the fact that the passage in question deals with the dominion of man over the lesser species, this phrase was seized upon by the early fathers to combat the Gnostic heresy, in which procreation was regarded as the imprisoning of souls in evil bodies. To this negative attitude, the Church responded with the affirmation that procreation was essentially good.

Augustine carried this argument considerably further, and became the chief architect of the position imbedded in the Western tradition. Not only was procreation the end of marriage but the end of each conjugal act. If any other end is sought the sin is venial within the marriage bond, provided "there is no attempt to prevent such propagation, either by wrong desire or evil appliance." (*Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, pp. 270-1.) In his treatise, *On the Morals of Manicheans* (Ch. 65), Augustine even opposed periodic continence as a means of birth control:

Is it not you who used to counsel us to observe as much as possible the time when a woman, after her purification, is most

likely to conceive, and to abstain from cohabitation at that time, lest the soul should be entangled in the flesh? This proves that you approve of having a wife, not for the procreation of children, but for the gratification of passion. In marriage, as the marriage law declares, the man and woman come together for the procreation of children.

This rigid doctrine, making procreation the sole end of marriage and the marital relationship, became the chief framework of the Scholastic position. Indeed viewed against the Augustinian background, the main stream of subsequent Catholic thought on the subject can be seen as an effort to humanize and liberalize the doctrine of marriage without jettisoning its framework.

One direction this effort has taken has been to broaden the ends of marriage. In place of the exclusive focus on procreation, the Code of Canon Law (1917) offered a dual "primary end":

The primary end of marriage is the procreation and education of children; its secondary end is mutual aid and the allaying of concupiscence. (Can. 1013, #1).

The possible conflict between the two values of this "primary end" appears to have been given little examination in Catholic treatises on the subject: the fact that too much procreation may depress the quality of education. Here is a potential road to modification of the Catholic position, but not yet open for travel.

A similar effort has been made to broaden the secondary ends of marriage. In *Casti Connubii* (1930), Pius XI added to "mutual aid" and the "quieting of concupiscence" a third secondary end: "the cultivating of mutual love." Pius XII continued this emphasis, to give the doctrine of marriage a somewhat more romantic and humane appeal. In his allocution to the Italian Union of Midwives in 1951 he referred to "the depths of spirituality in conjugal love," going on to say that they had been put by nature and the Creator "at the service of our descendants." A number of books have been written in recent years to dress the Roman position in more attractive garb, in relation to the "cultivating of mutual love."

Sanction for periodic continence

The main modern development in Catholic teaching on marriage has been the conditional sanction evolved for periodic con-

tinence as a means of birth control. Starting with a very cautious decision by the Sacred Penitentiary in 1853, the idea grew that the rhythm method was licit under certain circumstances. There is an oblique reference to the licit character of this practice in *Casti Connubii*. Pius XII in October, 1951, in speaking of the reasons which would justify periodic continence, referred to the "duty of providing for the conservation of the human race," but went on to say:

Serious reasons, such as those found in the medical, eugenic, economic, and social "indications," can exempt for a long time, perhaps even for the whole duration of the marriage, from this positive duty.

A month later, the Pope made a statement which marks a liberal apex in official Catholic thought, when he stated:

One may even hope . . . that science will succeed in providing this licit method with a sufficiently secure basis, and the most recent information seems to confirm such a hope.

Efforts by medical scientists to give periodic continence a more "secure basis" have been directed towards development of a more reliable test for ovulation and development of drugs to regularize the feminine cycle. The Doyle test for ovulation, announced in the spring of 1958, was a step on this road. It is also thought possible that a variant of drugs being tested as oral contraceptives may help to promote more regular ovulation and thus make the rhythm method more reliable.

Opposition to contraceptives continues

The very thin line between a presumable sanction for drugs to make periodic continence a more reliable means of birth control, and presumable opposition to oral contraceptives as to all other "artificial" means of birth control, is where the Roman Catholic position now stands. W. J. Gibbons, S.J., argues that an oral contraceptive is "morally unacceptable" because "its intent is contraceptive . . . and it is in fact temporary sterilization." (*Eugenics Quarterly*, June 1956, p. 86). The reference here is to drugs which defer ovulation. Other drugs which inhibit the implantation of a fertilized ovum are condemned on grounds of feticide.

Those who try to adapt, without basic revision, the Augustinian position to the needs of responsible parenthood find themselves on this knife edge between birth control by means of pills to inhibit ovulation, which may be "shameful" and "intrinsically vicious," and birth control by means of pills to regularize ovulation, which may be licit. It is not an easy position to maintain.

Indeed, it may be that the difficulties have favored the rise in certain Roman Catholic circles, particularly in the United States, of what might be called a "fertility cult." This party tends to deny the existence of population pressures so far as possible, to count on economic miracles for a "solution" where denial is impossible, and to deny or restrict in any case the "serious reasons" which would justify family planning. Clues to this point of view were provided by Catholic attacks on the recent U.N. report. Also, to cite an example, in a book on *Overpopulation* Anthony F. Zimmerman of the Catholic University of America said:

The family which courageously and even heroically rears a large number of children in an overpopulated area merits special praise for its virtue.

Low birth rates indicate disobedience to teaching

Meanwhile, the evidence accumulates that millions of Catholic lay people do not follow the priests in these matters. The birth rates in Spain, Portugal and Italy have fallen below that of the United States. Studies in England and West Germany have shown very little difference in fertility rates as between Protestants and Catholics. A census sample in the U.S. in 1957 showed the Protestant birth rate to be possibly a trifle higher than the Catholic. Not even Catholic apologists claim that such figures result from the wide use of the still unreliable rhythm methods.

The evidence of fairly massive disobedience by the laity in regard to the Church's teaching here does not of course imply any open challenge to this teaching. Some find it a stumbling block to faith, others a source of anticlericalism. But the majority of those who do not live by the doctrine of marriage apparently are prepared to live with it provided the rules are not enforced too strictly, and perhaps even defend the doctrine against outside challenge, out of a sense of loyalty. It is the fact that the rules are not enforced too strictly, rather than the disobedience, which suggests the inner weakness of the Roman position.

Basic elements of the Augustinian doctrine, however, have been so fixed by tradition and Papal edict, that the route to any major revision of the position is not visible. If there is a return from the "fertility cult" point of view to the approach indicated in the Papal allocutions of 1951, with further clarification of the "serious reasons" justifying family planning, and science does in fact make periodic continence more reliable as a means, responsible parenthood will be easier for the faithful. However desirable, such an accommodation of policy without change in the foundations will be unsure and unstable. Roman Catholic parents, moreover, account for only a small portion of the population problem, and mainly in Latin America. Non-Catholics who want more reliable or appropriate means for family planning, and particularly those who seek to understand the deeper meanings of responsible parenthood, need a more adequate position and better theological undergirding.

TOWARDS AN ECUMENICAL POSITION

While the goad to study and action in this matter is the population explosion, the center of the problem from a Christian perspective is the family. Behind the statistics, the rates of fertility and mortality, the imbalance of needs and resources, and all the other impersonal-sounding facts, are human beings who look for moral and practical guidance. It is these human beings who are the Church's first concern: the parents who seek genuine companionship and responsible use of God-given reproductive processes, the impoverished parents who see no alternative to sterilization in limiting their families, the young people who are tempted by readily available and reliable contraceptives. Too many churches in the ecumenical movement have shirked their responsibilities to help the family with the guidance it needs.

Often it has been argued that guidance in family planning would be an intrusion into the private life of husband and wife, and that the questions should be left to the individual consciences of the married couple. This is evasion of responsibility. For the Church has an obligation to help parents to understand considerations which the family must weigh in a responsible decision before God. The real alternative to the intrusive approach of the confessional is training in the principles of responsible parenthood.

Several communions have taken their obligations in this field seriously. The number may be larger than we are aware of, since church statements on the subject have not been collected systematically (a defect now being remedied). For example, the Netherlands Reformed Church issued a long and serious document on the family in 1951. The Lutheran Church of Sweden issued an important guide in 1953. Several Lutheran bodies in the United States have issued carefully prepared statements in recent years, that of the Augustana Synod of 1954 being particularly outstanding. The Lambeth Conference of 1930 wrestled with the issues. And several other denominations have issued briefer statements. A number of family life departments have been established. A reflection of the comparative neglect of this issue is the fact that as yet there is no department of family life in the structure of the World Council of Churches.

In recent months, however, churches and councils, and the ecumenial agencies, too, have begun to move in a significant and encouraging way. First mention must be given to the leadership provided by Anglican leaders. A group convened by Canon Max Warren at the request of the Archbishop of Canterbury labored long and well to produce a 229-page report on *The Family in Contemporary Society* (S.P.C.K.,¹ London, April 1958). The subsequent report of the committee of bishops under the Rt. Rev. Stephen Bayne, and the related resolutions of the Lambeth Conference, help greatly to lift consideration of this question to a truly responsible level.

In the United States, the U.S. Conference for the World Council of Churches referred issues raised in a paper of mine on "Population and International Development" to the urgent consideration of the member churches. Several denominations and the National Council have undertaken new studies in preparations for policy statements.

Need for Christian perspective on the family

It seems clear that the first task is to go behind the tradition affected by so many non-theological factors to the Bible itself for a clearer understanding of the Christian perspective on the family. When one looks with open eyes and mind at the Scriptures

¹ Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

the central insight, from Genesis through the Epistles, is the view of the *spiritual* significance of the marital relationship, the "two become one," the two whom "God has joined together" (Gen. 2:24, Mk. 10:8, Eph. 5:31). The holy character of the state of true matrimony tends to be overlooked, when it is contrasted with the "religious" life of celibacy.

The positive attitude towards procreation in the injunction to "increase and multiply" (Gen. 1:28) undoubtedly has relevance beyond the conditions of life in Old Testament times. It offers an important consideration in a responsible marriage. But the injunction is to "fill the earth and subdue it," not to over-fill the earth and be subdued by the pressures of population on the means of subsistence.

Moreover, the alternative explanation of the creation of male and female in Chapter 2 of Genesis, neglected in Roman Catholic treatments of the subject, has its own claims to major consideration. The insight that companionship is a fundamental element in true marriage, that it is "wrong for the man to be alone" (Gen. 2:18), was regarded by Calvin as the key to the Scriptures on this subject.

Even if the idea that the primary purpose of marriage is the begetting of children were valid—an assertion in Catholic argumentation despite the broader definition in Canon Law—it would not follow that each conjugal act must not prevent the possibility of conception. The admitted other purposes of marriage, called "secondary ends" in *Casti Connubii*, have their rights. And the exercise of these rights through contraception does not of itself determine whether the purpose called "primary" is served or denied. Only the total marriage relationship determines that.

Without infringing further on territory which needs to be mapped by competent theologians, may I express the personal judgment that the Lambeth Conference of 1958 constitutes a major step towards that creative ecumenical consensus which is needed both to provide relevant guidance to the family and to establish an effective counter-weight to the erroneous Roman position at the international level. Such a counter-weight is needed to move the present impasse on population policy. But it will be effective only insofar as it represents a position conscientiously held and advanced. (See page 19.)

Religious bodies speak

We are indebted to the June 14, 1958 issue of "Information Service" of the National Council of Churches for six of the following statements by American religious bodies. The statement by the Lambeth Conference was made at a later date.

The means which a married pair uses to determine the number and the spacing of the births of their children are a matter for them to decide with their own consciences, on the basis of competent medical advice and in a sense of accountability to God. . . . So long as it causes no harm to those involved, either immediately or over an extended period, none of the methods for controlling the number and spacing of the births of children has any special merit or demerit. It is the spirit in which the means are used, rather than whether it is "natural" or "artificial," which defines its "rightness" or "wrongness." "Whatever ye do, do all to the glory of God" (I Cor. 10:31) is a principle pertinent to the use of the God-given reproductive power.

—AUGUSTANA EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH SYNOD OF 1954

We believe in the ideal of marriage as the complete union of one man and one woman, who, forsaking all others, give themselves to each other. This idea, we are convinced, cannot be realized without mutuality and freedom resulting from physical and spiritual oneness. We believe in the right of children to be wanted and the right of husbands and wives to assume parenthood. Therefore, we favor the principle of voluntary child-bearing, believing that it sacramentalizes physical union and safeguards the well-being of the family and society.

—CONGREGATIONAL CHRISTIAN CHURCHES, GENERAL COUNCIL, 1931

In the interest of more stable family life . . . [this synod] expresses itself as supporting the right of married persons to all appropriate medical aid in the wisest planning of their families, and protests the practice of organized minorities which deny them this right through law or pressure on responsible social agencies.

—EVANGELICAL AND REFORMED CHURCH, GENERAL SYNOD, 1947

n planned parenthood

Marriage is an achievement. . . . It comprises a growing oneness in which emotional adjustments from time to time are affected by an understanding of right ways of living together. . . . We believe that planned parenthood, practiced in Christian conscience, may fulfill rather than violate the will of God.

—THE METHODIST CHURCH, QUADRENNIAL CONFERENCE, 1956

We endorse the efforts being made to secure for licensed physicians, hospitals, and medical clinics, freedom to convey such information as in accord with a more wholesome family life, wherein parenthood may be undertaken with due respect for the health of mothers and the welfare of their children.

—PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH, GENERAL CONVENTION, 1946

Husband and wife are called to exercise the power of procreation responsibly before God. This implies planning their parenthood in accordance with their ability to provide for their children and carefully nurture them in fulness of Christian faith and life. The health and welfare of the mother-wife should be the major concern in such decisions. Irresponsible conception of children up to the limit of biological capacity and selfish limitation of the number of children are equally detrimental. Choice as to means of conception control should be made upon professional medical advice.

—UNITED LUTHERAN CHURCH, 20TH BIENNIAL CONVENTION, 1956

The Conference believes that the responsibility for deciding upon the number and frequency of children has been laid by God upon the consciences of parents everywhere: that this planning, in such ways as are mutually acceptable to husband and wife in Christian conscience, is a right and important factor in Christian family life and should be the result of positive choice before God. Such responsible parenthood, built on obedience to all the duties of marriage, requires a wise stewardship of the resources and abilities of the family as well as a thoughtful consideration of the varying population needs and problems of society and the claims of future generations.

—LAMBETH CONFERENCE OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND, 1958



Simple methods of contraception

An article review of Simple Methods of Contraception: An Assessment of Their Medical, Moral, and Social Implications, edited by Winfield Best and Frederick S. Jaffe, with a Foreword by R. Gordon Douglas, M.D., President, American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. Planned Parenthood Federation of America, 501 Madison Avenue, New York, N. Y. Issued in June, 1958, 64 pp., 25c for postage and handling.

It is assumed that the readers of this article-review have read Dr. Fagley's article, "The Population Problem and Family Planning," pages 3 through 19, and that they are familiar with such forecasts as that the population of the U.S.A. probably will be sixteen times as large in 200 years as it is now.

By Park Jerauld White, M.D., Assistant Professor of Clinical Pediatrics, Washington University School of Medicine, and Director, Department of Pediatrics, Homer G. Phillips Hospital, St. Louis. Dr. White is a member of the Council for Social Action of the Congregational Christian Churches.

The booklet, *Simple Methods of Contraception*, is especially welcome as it brings us the views of a group of medical, sociological, and clerical authorities on *methods* of achieving an end we so urgently need to attain. The booklet grew out of a symposium sponsored by the Planned Parenthood Federation of America, which was held in New York on October 15, 1957.

Dr. Douglas writes of the participants in the symposium in his excellent foreword: "The skill of the medical investigator is interwoven with the special disciplines of human behavior and values—especially social scientists and clergymen." To list the thirty members of the symposium with their high qualifications would of course be impossible. The co-chairmen should, however, be mentioned: Alan F. Guttmacher, M.D., Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons; and David H. Wice, D.D., D.H.L., Rabbi, Congregation Rodeph Shalom, Philadelphia.

"When one considers life" . . .

It was Professor Carl G. Hartman, Chairman of the Planned Parenthood Federation's Committee on Biological Research, who said in the symposium: "I don't think the reproductive process is any more or less wonderful than the workings of the brain or of sight or of any other bodily function. When one considers life, it tends to make one religious." Amen!

When the concerned Christian "considers life," he cannot avoid social action. The cerebral processes of contemporary fundamentalists who would ban contraception on "Biblical" grounds haven't advanced much beyond the time of Adam and Eve, who were bidden to be fruitful and multiply, and who obeyed, in a world blissfully unaware that the fuse of the population explosion was even then being ignited.

Speaking of Adam and Eve, Dr. Guttmacher himself began his remarks with this statement: "Man's attempt to control the size of his family, first by infanticide, then by abortion, then by contraception, goes back beyond recorded time. In the early Egyptian papyri, we read prescriptions for the prevention of impregnation." Then, casually overleaping the centuries: "In Planned Parenthood Clinics, we have almost universally prescribed diaphragms plus jelly, because we have had no better technique to offer. . . . I need not tell you that [present] tech-

niques are not such as can be applied extensively in areas of extreme population pressure." They are, in other words, for the "elite," who are least in need of them.

Emerging variety of methods

There follows Dr. Ruth Finkelstein's study (Sinai Hospital, Baltimore) of 801 patients seen in the post-partum clinic, of whom 364 chose to use a new foaming spermicidal vaginal tablet, 274 chose to use jelly alone, and 163 chose diaphragm and jelly. The patients ranged from 14 to 43 years of age and had already had from 1 to 11 children each; 18% were high-school graduates; 41% were Negro, 59% white; 72.1% were Protestant, 27.7% were Roman Catholic, 0.2% Jewish. After the 3-year period of the study, no less than 320 dropped out, or about 40%—due to "lack of sustained motivation" and also to the fact that about 20% of the population move each year.

Next, Dr. Hilliard Dubrow of Mount Sinai Hospital in New York reported on the use of vaginal Gel, Cream, and a new tablet not yet on the market. The women studied averaged 25.4 years of age; Puerto Rican 45.4%, other white 14.4%, Negro 38.8%, other 1.4%. The religious composition of those accepting contraception was: Jewish 5.2%, Protestant 36.0%, Roman Catholic 55.6%, other 3.2%. In spite of careful instruction, in Spanish when necessary, incorrect use ranged up to 5%. Dr. Dubrow concluded that "when women seek advice on child-spacing, an apparently effective, simple method of contraception-control, using cream or tablet alone, can be offered, which the couple may find more acceptable than the traditional [diaphragm, etc.] methods."

Are the oral methods of contraception safe for the woman taking them and will they prevent unwanted pregnancy? A study was made by Dr. M. E. Paniagua in Puerto Rico, beginning in 1956. A synthetic steroid to which a small amount of estrogen had been added was used. It was administered on a 20-day cyclic schedule. At the end of the first 2 years, 560 women had enrolled, with 313 still participating. There were 24 unplanned pregnancies, 12 being due to minor or imagined side-effects, and 12 to irregular use. None of the failures could be termed method-failure. Dr. Paniagua himself emphasizes that "no conclusions can be drawn as yet with regard to the possible effects on the

ovary of very prolonged steroid medication, since 19 months is the longest period of treatment." He adds that *many more years of observation* (italics mine) will be needed to rule out the possibility of permanent undesired effects.

I have discussed this matter of (necessarily) prolonged oral medication with steroids for contraceptive purposes with Professor Willard M. Allen of our Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology at the Washington University School of Medicine, himself a distinguished endocrinologist and steroid chemist. He reminded me of work done with other substances which prevent the implantation of the ovum in the uterus, etc. Like the cautious workers mentioned above, Dr. Allen is emphatically of the opinion that the possibility of the late development of deleterious effects from long-term use of steroids must for the present rule out their general use as contraceptives.

Dr. Allen realistically stressed the fact that even if oral steroids should prove "safe," their cost, unless reduced, would be prohibitive even for social agencies furnishing them to large numbers of women.

What about infertility?

Any group or individual claiming to *plan* parenthood should try to cure and to prevent infertility. This "other side" was given timely emphasis in the symposium by Dr. Coleridge M. Gill, Assistant Clinical Professor of Obstetrics and Gynecology at Howard University, Washington, D. C. He pointed out that the "tremendous population increase is despite the fact that there are only about 3 or 4 days a month when a woman can get pregnant." Dr. Gill reminded his hearers of the frantic 35- or 36-year-old individual whose "whole life has been disoriented because she has not become pregnant." . . . "I believe," he added, "that women should be oriented to use contraceptives, but at the same time they should be advised that the time to get pregnant is when they are young." Dr. Gill's underscoring of this tenet of Planned Parenthood was ably seconded by Dr. Guttmacher.

Do contraceptives promote sexual promiscuity?

The clergymen and sociologists, commenting on the possibility that knowledge of contraception promotes sexual promiscuity among the young, quite sensibly "played it down." Mention was

made of the fact that there are 170,000 babies born out of wedlock each year in this country. Fear of pregnancy does not inhibit the sexual activities of those of the young who are so minded. And once again, realistic recognition of the durability of the family, beset as it is by the many disrupting influences of our modern life, was encouragingly affirmed.

And what of Roman Catholic opposition?

Two recent events give timeliness to the symposium's treatment of Roman Catholic opposition to contraception: (1) the death of the universally respected Pope, Pius XII, leaving his successor to rule on *non-instrumental* methods now being developed; (2) the recent much-publicized difficulty between the Hospital Commissioner of the City of New York and the Kings County Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology over fitting with a contraceptive device a Protestant woman who desired and needed it for medical reasons.

Co-chairman Rabbi David Wice, with his usual insight, remarked: "Too much emphasis has been placed on the opposition of the Roman Catholic Church, and not enough on the fact that there is almost universal acceptance of the principle of family planning. . . . The Vatican is concerned with the effects of overpopulation and its relationship to war and peace."

A footnote quotes from a speech made by Pope Pius XII to the National Congress of the Family Front in 1951: "We affirm the legitimacy and, at the same time, the limits—in truth very wide—of a regulation of offspring which, unlike so-called 'birth control,' is compatible with the law of God. One may even hope that science will succeed in providing this licit [rhythm] method with a sufficiently secure basis."

Rabbi Wice concluded his remarks concerning the possible cooperation of the Roman church by saying: "We disagree with the Catholics mainly on method, and I am hopeful that one of these days there may be a non-vaginal method [of contraception] which the Roman church may accept."

Again, Amen. But obviously the oral method is still so experimental as to be a long way from adoption. Also, if at some distant date the Vatican gives it favorable consideration by way of an allocution, the *purpose* of such medication will have to be ecclesiastically satisfactory.

In the future we may expect further encounters between Roman Catholic authority and those who do not feel bound by it in the matter of contraception-for-medical-reasons. Certainly the Kings County fracas with the Hospital Commissioner (himself not a Catholic) will not be the last of its kind. The end result of the case of a non-Catholic woman requesting and needing reliable contraception was that the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology of the hospital was permitted to act upon its best judgment. (See page 26.)

"Finally, brethren"

Seeking after the Good Life, and taking action to attain it, "looking ever unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,"—surely, this is the essence of Christian social action. I am sure that those of you who have contrived to "read me through" will agree that we, like those who took part in the symposium under discussion, are engaged in an honest attempt to put to best use our God-given "dominion over the works of his hands." We seek but to do our part to make our children the "children of light."

In mid-October the population of the U.S.A. reached 175,000,000. In 1940, when the population was 135,000,000, experts forecast that the population would not reach 150,000,000 until 1963. The 4,250,000 births in 1957 were almost exactly double the number for mid-depression 1935. The birth rate increased from 16.9 per thousand to 25, while the death rate declined from 10.9 per thousand to 9.6. The population of the U.S.A. is growing at an annual rate of three million, or one additional person every eleven seconds.

New York Board of Hospitals lifts ban on birth control

An unwritten rule has prohibited the giving of birth control therapy in the hospitals operated by the City of New York. Public discussion of the ban began in mid-July when Commissioner Morris A. Jacobs forbade Dr. Louis M. Hellman to fit a contraceptive device for a diabetic woman with three children. The patient was a Protestant who desired the service.

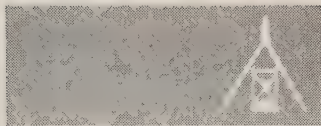
The New York Times, *New York Post*, and *New York World Telegram and Sun* carried many news stories and editorials about the situation. Many organizations protested the ban against giving birth control therapy, among them the Protestant Council of New York, the New York Board of Rabbis, the National Council of Churches, the New York Civil Liberties Union, the General Council of Congregational Christian Churches, and many others.

On September 17, Commissioner Jacobs, chairman, announced that the Board of Hospitals had voted to lift the ban against birth control therapy. The resolution directs municipal hospitals to provide "medical advice, preventive measures, and devices for female patients under their care whose life and health in the opinion of the medical staff may be jeopardized by the pregnancy and who wish to avail themselves of such services."

The new policy was hailed by the American Jewish Council and the Protestant Council of New York. The statement of the latter group said that "the withholding of therapeutic birth control advice and treatment from all patients because of the religious views of some violated basic constitutional principles. . . . We are confident that the new policy can and will be administered with due respect for the religious beliefs of all."

The statement issued by the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of New York and the Diocese of Brooklyn said that the new policy of the Board of Hospitals "introduces an immoral practice in our hospitals that perverts the nature and dignity of men." The position of the church concerning staff members who are Catholics was made clear: "All Catholic personnel of our hospitals are reminded of their grave obligation in conscience to in no way cooperate with such procedure."

program planning



Those of us who remember the stern warnings given to college graduates that they were having too few children to reproduce their share of the population may find it difficult to believe that the world is in grave danger of over-population. The facts given by Dr. Fagley in "The Population Problem and Family Planning" make it clear that the welfare of mankind is as threatened by over-population as by annihilation by atomic war.

Study by the committee

The Social Action Committee would like to study the situation before planning a program of education and action for the church and the community.

One meeting of the committee might be devoted to consideration of the population explosion and the impossibility of increasing the supply of food and other necessities to meet it (page 7 to 9). How does the rapid rise in the population affect your county? A county health officer would have interesting information concerning the rate of growth of the population. A member of the committee might interview him to get answers to these ques-

tions: Is the population of our county rising or falling? Is the change due to migration or to the birth rate? Is the increase greater among certain groups in the population? Another member of the committee might interview the county agricultural agent to discover how much more food the county could produce if known methods of improvement were adopted.

The second meeting of the committee might discuss voluntary family planning, dealing with both the technical aspects discussed by Dr. White in "Simple Methods of Contraception," pages 20-25, and with the religious implications discussed by Dr. Fagley on pages 9-17. The discussion would be enriched if a physician or a representative of Planned Parenthood were present to discuss the technical aspects of family planning; and if a Jewish rabbi and a Roman Catholic priest could be present or interviewed to give the positions of their respective religious bodies.

A third meeting of the committee might be held by groups in metropolitan areas to discuss the planning that is necessary now if our cities are to be centers of life 25 years from now.

Discussion might begin with a review of *The Exploding Metropolis* by the Editors of *Fortune* (New York: Doubleday and Co., 193 pp., \$3.95). The authors raise the question as to "whether the city will continue to serve as a unifying core for its surrounding metropolitan region, or whether it will be utterly fragmented. . . . Today some 17 million Americans live in dwellings that are beyond rehabilitation—decayed, dirty, rat infested, without decent heat or light or plumbing. . . . The problem afflicts all our metropolitan cities, but it is most severe in the biggest, richest, most industrialized. . . . More and more, the city is becoming a place of extremes—a place for the very poor, or the very rich, or the slightly odd."

Education in church groups

As a result of its study, the Social Action Committee might prepare one program or a series of programs for two or three meetings and offer to give them before the women's society, the laymen's group, the young adults' and the youth group. Elements of the program might include:

- "The Population Explosion"—a fifteen-minute presentation of the present situation, forecasts of future expansion, the inability of the earth to support too large a population, and the political implications of over-population.

- "The Population Explosion and Our County"—a five-minute presentation of the forecasts for population growth in the county and the possibilities for increased production of food.

- "Family Planning"—a ten-minute discussion of the methods of the spacing of births and the convictions of various religions concerning these practices.

- Questions directed to any speaker to clarify the facts given, followed by open discussion.

If the chart on page 6 and the map on page 9 could be reproduced in poster form, they would help to visualize the problem.

The committee might buy copies of this issue of *SOCIAL ACTION* and give them to participants in the meeting. (See page 2 for quantity prices.)

An invaluable resource booklet for young people is *Faith, Sex and Love* by William Hamilton. It is one of a very few booklets which deal with love and sex in the light of Christian faith. It is available from the National Student YMCA and YWCA, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y., for 25c each or 5 for \$1.00.

A series of sermons

The minister will want to call the population explosion to the attention of the congregation in his sermons. He may wish to devote one sermon or a series

of sermons to the population explosion and its threat to the well-being of each child yet to be born; or he may prefer to deal with this problem in other contexts. In any case, the problem of family limitation must be considered as a part of the Christian understanding of the family and the nature of man.

One stimulating resource book is *The Mystery of Love and Marriage*, a Study in the Theology of Sexual Relation, by Derrick Sherwin Bailey, 145 pp., SCM Press, Ltd., 56 Bloomsbury St., London, W.C. 1, England.

Marriage counselling

Ministers will want to include a consideration of family planning in their counselling of couples, both before and after marriage. As Dr. Fagley says (page 15), "the real alternative to the intrusive approach of the confessional is training in the principles of responsible parenthood." Churches have an obligation to help parents understand the principles which they must consider in the "responsible use of God-given reproductive processes."

The minister may wish to give copies of this issue of SOCIAL ACTION to couples to help them understand the dangers inherent in the rapid rise of the population and to help in their consideration of the theology of sexual relations. For a deeper understanding of this subject, he may wish to refer them to *The Mys-*

tery of Love and Marriage by Bailey.

Education in the community

The committee may wish to offer its help in planning programs on the population explosion to the high schools, to youth-serving agencies such as the YMCA and YWCA, and to other community organizations.

The committee may wish to ask the newspapers to carry more information about the population explosion and family planning. Permission to quote from articles in this issue of SOCIAL ACTION will be given to qualified organizations. Requests should be directed to the authors and to the editor.

Action

The committee may wish to offer its cooperation and support to the local chapter of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America and to the hospitals, clinics, and welfare agencies that are giving birth control therapy in the community.

Church members may wish to correspond with missionaries and others who are working overseas to discover what progress is being made toward a reduction in unwanted births.

Interested persons may wish to write to Congressmen and to the Department of State to suggest that our government supplement its technical assistance to underdeveloped nations with help in family planning.

—FERN BABCOCK



FAITH, SEX AND LOVE

Hymns

Praise to the Lord, the Al-
mighty, the King of Creation
For the Beauty of the Earth
All Creatures of Our God and
King

Poem

The Lord who created must
wish us to create
And employ our creation again
in His service
Which is already His service
in creating.
For Man is joined spirit and
body,
And therefore must serve as
spirit and body.
Visible and invisible, two
worlds meet in Man:
Visible and invisible must
meet in His temple;
You must not deny the body.

—T. S. ELIOT, Choruses from
"The Rock." IX.

A Meditation

Genesis 1:26-31

God looked upon his creation
and called it good. It is not good
that men should be alone; be
fruitful and multiply and re-
plenish the earth. The body is

made by God; it is therefore
good.¹

John 1:14

The incarnation suggests that
God deemed the body worthy to
be an instrument of his redemp-
tive purpose through Christ. If
human life was used as a bearer
of the divine act of God, the
body cannot be regarded as evil
or unclean.¹

I Corinthians 6:13b-16, 19-20

The Biblical tradition affirms
that sex, the body, the whole
physical life, are good things
and not bad. They are to be
used for the glory and praise of
God. All of the physical expres-
sions that come naturally to men
and women as symbols of their
affection—these are good and
important things.¹

Matthew 5:27-30

Jesus says that you have heard
the scribes say that the com-
mandment against adultery is
fulfilled merely by refraining
from overt indulgence in non-
permissible sexual acts. But this
is not a deep enough under-
standing of the law. Anyone who
looks on a woman with lust has

committed adultery with her in his heart. The inner beginning of adultery is lust, the desire of a self to impose itself sexually over the will of another. The presence of this inner lust is an offense against God.¹

Genesis 2:24

There are similarities in God's love for man and in the love which exists between a man and a woman. God's love is not only undeserved; it is a suffering love. It is a love that is turned away by no obstacles, a love that even meets and somehow includes the terrible cry of despair from Jesus' lips just before his death. It is a love that seeks man out in his rebellion, doubt and boredom. It is a love that lasts through disaster, misfortune and personal suffering. It is a love that death cannot change. It is a love that loves even when it is not returned. If this is true of God's love for us, does not the experience of marriage help us to understand the full meaning of this divine love?¹

Mark 8:35

You will not find a true self in the search for self-realization or self-fulfillment. You will not find a true self independently of your relationship to others.

¹ Adapted from *Faith, Sex and Love* by William Hamilton, National Student YMCA and YWCA, 291 Broadway, New York 7, N. Y. 25c.

You will find a true self only when you see you cannot find true meaning in yourself alone. The paradox of the Christian life is profoundly true to human experience.¹

Prayers

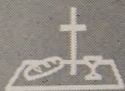
O eternal God, Creator and Preserver of all mankind, Giver of all spiritual grace, the Author of everlasting life; send thy blessing upon these thy servants, this man and this woman, whom we bless in thy Name; that they, living faithfully together, may surely perform and keep the vow and covenant betwixt them made, and may ever remain in perfect love and peace together, and live according to thy laws; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.²

O God of love, who hast given a new commandment through Thine only-begotten Son, that we should love one another even as Thou didst love us, the unworthy and the wandering, and gavest Thy beloved Son for our life and salvation; we pray Thee, Lord, give to Thy servants, in all time of our life on earth, a mind forgetful of past ill-will, a pure conscience and sincere thoughts, and a heart to love our brethren; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.³

² *The Book of Common Prayer.*

³ *The Book of Common Order*, Oxford University Press, New York.

social action calendar



- JANUARY 18-24** *Church and Economic Life Week, sponsored by the National Council of Churches.*
- FEBRUARY** *United Church of Christ Month of Emphasis on Christian Social Action.*
- FEBRUARY 3-6** *Churchmen's Washington Seminar, Washington, D. C.*
- FEBRUARY 5-7** *Meeting of the Council for Christian Social Action, Buck Hill Falls Inn, Cresco, Penna.*
- FEBRUARY 8** *Race Relations Sunday.*
- APRIL 7-9** *United Church of Christ Washington Seminar, Washington, D. C.*
- JUNE 22-26** *West Coast Christian Social Action Institute, White Memorial Retreat Center, Mill Valley, Calif.*
- JULY 13-17** *Midwest Christian Social Action Institute, Lakeland College, Sheboygan, Wisc.*
- JULY 20-24** *Central Christian Social Action Institute, Congregational Center, Lisle, N. Y.*
- JULY 27-31** *Eastern Christian Social Action Institute, Congregational Center, Framingham, Mass.*

● Coming issues of SOCIAL ACTION:

January—Racial Practices of Churches

February—What Is Happening to the Farmer?

March—Stewardship and the Hidden Persuaders

April—The Little Foxes

May—Christian Burial

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